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To the Editors of the Wall Street Journal:

The Department of Education is not being truthful about why the majority of its "Absent Teacher Reserve Pool" (which should not exist in the first place—and is entirely created of the Chancellor's policies to rid the system of currently tenured teachers) has more or less given up seeking new positions.

The Chancellor's policy to decrease the proportion of tenured teachers by making tenure hard to achieve is one he is entirely reasonable in promulgating. The invidious ways in which he seeks to purge already tenured teachers is depriving the city's students of experienced, tried and true educators, and is contractually, statutorily, and constitutionally unlawful. As an attorney, I spend the majority of my effort litigating the unlawful acts Department of Education has perpetrated.

Experienced teachers have built up teaching paradigms over years, if not decades; have a collected a wealth of salient instructional materials over that time as well; and have developed contacts within the community to assist students and their families to optimize a myriad of programs and services to facilitate optimal educational advancement for the students. The salary scale is also structured that a teacher with twenty-two years in the city school system with at least a full year's study beyond the Master's degree earns more than twice what a teacher with less than one year's experience and graduate study but no earned Master's degree, and even one with four years experience but nothing beyond the Baccalaureate, earns. To be candid, the candidates at the low end of the salary scale are physically more attractive than they are 22 years later at the top end of the scale, as well.

Principals used to be older, had previous teaching experience, and respected the talents of their veteran teachers. The salary of faculty members in a school never impacted recruiting choices as a school was allocated teacher "lines" that were only limited by discipline area. In fact, before Mr. Klein made teacher salaries part of the "accountability" school budget, certain community school districts prided themselves on having the highest teacher salaries as indicia of a highly educated, stable, experienced staff, that had been retained through a favorable working environment. Mr. Klein has turned that into "why hire a teacher at \$90,000.00-\$100,000.00 when two teachers can be hired at \$45,000.00-\$50,000.00." Moreover, the Principals are being replaced by graduates of Klein's "Leadership Academy" who are generally under 40 and have little or no teaching experience; such Principals are intimidated by the best seasoned teachers, fear that said teachers are looking over

the new Principal's shoulder and either are shunned in the recruitment process or are egregiously brought up on trivial or fabricated disciplinary charges and reassigned to detention halls called Teacher Reassignment Centers aka "rubber rooms," if found in place when the new Principal arrives. All teachers not acquitted, after hearings, of each and every one of dozens of "gotcha" specifications (word wall was outdated by a week on pacer timetable, student left the room for a drink without a hall pass—when the drinking fountain was a few feet from the classroom door and in view of the teacher, lesson was not interrupted to address a late-comer and insist he sign the "late" book . . .) are added to the ATR pool, and are replaced by new hires from the outside. The Department will give examples of teachers who rightly must be disciplined, and definitely there are such teachers – but they are in the minority of those removed from the classroom.

Principals neither have to accept anyone who is not cute, young, low paid, and malleable (euphemism for inexperienced and submissive) that they do not chose nor do they have to keep any teacher that they dislike—they can always blame them for something and reassign them to sit somewhere to await hearings.

Another mechanism to reduce the tenured teacher workforce *of already tenured teachers*, is to close and restructure then reopen, failing schools with new Principals who select their own staff, and given the above structure are likely to choose only young, inexperienced, low paid, untenured teachers.

Some ATR's have sent thousands of resumes, have gone on to the website only to find problems with logging on, etc., and have gotten sparse interviews and no regular appointment once their salary (set on a matrix as they progress in academic milestones and longevity benchmarks) is ascertained.

ATR's have e-mailed and called me to say they heard there was going to be a teacher hiring hall fair and called their Human Resources Officer to ascertain when and where—only to be told it was for new hires only, ATR's are not invited.

There has become such low morale and intimidation of the tenured teacher cadre, that it is no surprise that some of the ATR pool have inured themselves to the wan counter-benefits of no papers to grade, no grades to calculate, no parent conferences, no lesson plans, and usually less harassment by supervisors constantly interrupting lessons to demand lesson plans; check display of student work on the walls; to check the use of sufficient manipulatives, charts, models and demonstrations; to see that no student is wearing a hat; to watch that the late book and hall pass book are used 100% of the time; to see that no student is nibbling on a morsel; to observe that all students are on task and engaged; and that no student addresses teacher or class without raising their hand and being acknowledged by the teacher; to observe what proportion of the students turn in assignments (none of these things are perfect in any classroom—but the targeted teacher only, is written up and eventually removed for these "gotchas" that go unobserved in favored teachers' classes that are rarely entered).

There has not been the improvement for which the Chancellor or the public is hoping. The Chancellor clamors about the ATR's, a class of teachers, invented by him by not utilizing a teacher displaced here, where needed there (never done before Klein), by insisting on very young Principals who are not as comfortable with older teachers (a product of his personal "Leadership Academy"),

by allowing Principals total autonomy on who teaches in their school (never allowed before) but then saddling them with a budget that favors low paid teachers (never done before only the number of “teacher lines” was allocated), but he is silent about the number of Principals he has fired for scrubbing (falsifying) standardized test scores to appear to be meeting goals that they do not have the administrative skill to meet, nor could they ever meet without the staff that intimidates them that they failed to hire or found a way to get rid of.

The school systems in inner cities will not meet their goals until they realize that a student spends only 8% of his or her awake hours in school. Where there is endemic dysfunction through generations of poverty, racism, lack of educational opportunity or a dysfunctional culture that does not sufficiently covet mastery and acquisition of knowledge as its own power, 8% is not going to do it. The culture must change by including those old enough to begin to realize what they have missed and change the ethos for the younger generation. We cannot teach the students unless we also educate their parents and caretakers both in substantive knowledge as well as in the need for positive interactions and a rich and continually ongoing topical dialog of the world they live in among peers and between the generations. Adult caretakers must receive at least minimum wage for their attendance to make up for lost income.

Gimmicks will not work, no idea that only involves the 8% of time the students are in school will work, the educational schism of the haves and the have-nots has grown too vast. The employment of the ATR’s in model adult education programs in tandem with greater educational opportunities for the children for whom they care, to include parent-child classes where they learn subjects together and must discuss them at home would be an excellent first step to academic improvement instead of all the wasted effort going into underutilization (ATR’s) and non-utilization (“reassignment” to rubber rooms and their equivalent) of thousands of teachers. Worst of all is the unlawful orchestrated relentless efforts to terminate the property rights that tenured teachers have in their continued employment, when even those the Chancellor does not want near a child (usually unwarrantedly) can be assigned to teach adults—to the benefit of all.

Ever optimistically that positive change can be effected,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joy Hochstadt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joy" written in a stylized, looped manner and the last name "Hochstadt" written in a more straightforward cursive script.